

## Trails in the Honey Badger Project Area

Outdoor recreation is the fastest growing use within the national forests and grasslands. Given the amount of population growth and development in northern Idaho and the greater Spokane area, as well as predicted future growth and development, it is reasonable to expect that the demand for recreational opportunities will continue to rise.

Located in the mountains just east or southeast of the communities of Bayview, Hayden, Dalton, Coeur d'Alene, and others, the Honey Badger Project Area is in an urban influence setting. Most visits to the area are day visits, and existing trails are popular for a wide variety of uses.

Trail sustainability is related to the capability of the trail surface to support currently planned and future uses with minimal impact to the natural systems of the area. Sustainable trails must be carefully located and designed to accommodate existing and future uses while only allowing appropriate uses. Conditions that help with trail sustainability include, for example, locating the trail on the contour or cross slope, avoiding trails that run down the fall line avoiding steep slopes, ensuring proper drainage, and minimizing stream crossings.

Several trails in the project area were not designed for the types and amount of uses occurring, and cannot sustain such uses. Wherever feasible, these trails are proposed for reconstruction or realignment to address poor conditions. Where the trails are in chronically poor condition due to their location on the landscape, obliteration may be proposed. In some cases (not all), a new trail segment may be proposed to provide access into the area.

The project area encompasses the 1,835-acre Canfield Mountain Primary Recreation Area, well known for trails that provide opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, mountain bikes, dirt bikes, ATVs, OHVs, and full-sized vehicles. Currently, about half of the 38 miles of single track trails in the Canfield area are in need of minor to major rerouting, rehabilitation, or heavy maintenance for long-term sustainability of these motorized trails. Also within the Canfield area are opportunities to develop loop trails for expanded recreation opportunities and to decommission both system and user-created non-system trails that are causing resource degradation. Both actions would help achieve forestwide desired conditions and meet goals and objectives for access and recreation.

In identifying the potential changes that could occur to the trail system, the project interdisciplinary team worked with members of the IPNF Trails Working Group (TWG) to determine which proposals would be feasible on the ground, increasing sustainability while providing desired user experiences.

### **Urban Influence Setting**

*This is where the Forest meets valley communities, developments, and corridors. Daily rejuvenation occurs along Forest edges and within Forest parcels intermixed with private lands. These areas are often extensions of local communities and provide quick, convenient access. Motorized and non-motorized trails are used for daily exercise and recharge, opportunities to appreciate the natural environment and cultural history. Designated trail systems are provided with community partnership and support. Interpretation and education messages encourage stewardship and "Tread Lightly" behavior.*

*- IPNF 2019 Sustainable Recreation Strategy*

## Potential Changes to Trails in the Honey Badger Project Area

The following provides a brief summary of the changes that will be carried forward into scoping. For tracking and analysis purposes only, trail segments were assigned an identification number (P#); these segment numbers are displayed on the [Honey Badger Trails Map](#).

### Trails for Nonmotorized Uses

The overall goal of changes to the trails system in the Honey Badger Project area is to increase the social, economic, environmental, and logistic sustainability of the trails. Trails that have a high social need yet do not meet the environmental, logistic, or economic sustainability levels may be rerouted to decrease their impact. There were multiple recommendations that new trail be constructed and/or existing user-created nonsystem routes be designated for nonmotorized uses. Adding trails north of West Canfield and East Canfield mountains would create a complex of North Canfield nonmotorized trails.

For example, there is potential to connect trails that cross private lands to national forest system nonmotorized trails at the western edge of the Canfield Mountain trail system. However, easements are required to ensure legal access. Until such easements can be obtained, the trails cannot be added to the system. In the meantime, there is an opportunity to construct a 3-mile trail (tentatively identified as the “Honey Badger” trail) that would provide additional non-motorized access at the western edge of the project area. General alignment of the trail was field validated in 2019. *See Trails Map Segment P1*

Proposed new trail construction in the West Butte area would add over 4 miles of nonmotorized trail to the system. *See Trails Map Segments P6 through P8*

An additional 3.4 miles of nonmotorized trail is proposed in the Colburn Creek Knob area. This would offer a scenic viewpoint, and is complementary and accessible via the West Butte trail, providing a loop. *See Trails Map Segment P9*

These five segments (P1-P6-P7-P8-P9) of additional trail would create a total of approximately 8.2 miles in a loop of new nonmotorized trails in the North Canfield Complex trail system.

### Trails for Motorized Wheeled Vehicles 50-inches Width or Less

As mentioned before, overall goal of changes to the trails system in the Honey Badger Project area is to increase the social, economic, environmental, and logistic sustainability of the trails. To improve user experience, reduce conflicts with other uses, and increase sustainability, several trails will be improved and/or have the use designation changed to provide a loop around the Canfield Mountain Recreation Area for motorized wheeled vehicles 50 inches or less in width. As part of these changes, the district is proposing the conversion of some trails on the southern portion of the system to better allow access for maintenance and emergency services. This change will also increase the access for <50” trails for the recreating public, reduce “Cherry-stem” or dead-end trails on the system, and will help to spread use across a greater area.

The **Jungleberry Trail** would create just over two miles of such trail through a combination of new construction, reconstruction of an old roadbed, and designation of a short segment of a user-created route. There is also a feasible location for a parking area that could accommodate 10 to 12 vehicles. *See Trails Map Segments P11, P72 and P73*

**Trail 1593** would have a combination of new construction (to connect pigtail routes) and reconstruction to address segments in poor condition. On the connecting route, design would need to ensure the approach to the existing road leaves good visibility to ensure public safety. *See Trails Map Segments P64 through P67*

### Trails for Single-Track Motorized Wheeled Vehicles

Social, economic, environmental, and logistic sustainability is heavily impacted by many sections of trail in the Canfield Recreation Area Trails system due to its extremely high use and close proximity to town. Several single-track routes on Canfield Mountain currently have poor conditions, such as fall-line trails, trail braiding, and muddy areas. These conditions contribute sediment to streams, reduce user safety, and are not sustainable. Depending on actual ground conditions, a combination of activities are proposed on **Trails 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and C**, including segments of new construction, reconstruction, and rerouting (where the damaged section is obliterated and replaced with either construction of a new segment or designation of a user-created trail segment). *See Trails Map Segments P24, P25, P26, P26A, P29, P30A, P32, P33, P34, and P74*

In addition, a segment of **Trail 4** is blown out; that segment would be repaired, with additional trail proposed for reconstruction/rerouting based on actual ground conditions. *See Trails Map Segment P28*

**Trail 9** would be realigned to address segments with poor trail conditions. *See Trails Map Segments P43 through P45*

**Trail 10** would have a combination of construction (to replace an obliterated segment), reconstruction and rerouting done to address trail located on the fall line, and sections that are eroding. *See Trails Map Segments P46 through P52*

**Trail D/Trail 28** would have a combination of reconstruction and rerouting, based on actual ground conditions. *See Trails Map Segments P62 and P63*

There were recommendations for construction of a new trail to help alleviate pressure on the popular Hells Canyon Trail. Several potential routes were considered but eliminated due to steepness, stream crossings, or impacts to elk security. A 2-mile route was identified that would drop down the ridge from **Hudlow Saddle to Hells Canyon** Trail. While the route is not as long as the TWG desired, it is in a location that would not impact other natural resources, and would help to alleviate the pressure on Hells Canyon Trail. *See Trails Map Segment P75*

### Trails with Proposed Changes in Designations

**Trail 7** would have a combination of construction, reconstruction and rerouting done to address segments that are located on the fall line, and sections that are eroding. The designation on approximately one mile of the trail would change from single-track motorized to 50-inches or less, to provide for the 50-inch or less route around the perimeter of the Canfield system (including loops), helping to disperse use and allow easier maintenance (about 1.3 miles of the trail would remain single-track motorized). *See Trails Map Segments P35, P36, P37, P38, P39, and P40*

**Trail 8** would be realigned in the upper segment; the designation of the lower segment would change from single-track motorized to 50-inches or less for the same reasons described for Trail 7. The parking area would potentially need to be redesigned to accommodate the change. *See Trails Map Segments P41 and P42*

**Trails A and B** would have a combination of new construction (to replace an obliterated segment), reconstruction, and rerouting based on actual ground conditions. Approximately five miles of trail would change from single-track motorized to 50-inches or less to provide for the 50-inch or less route around the perimeter of the Canfield system (including loops), helping to disperse use and allow easier maintenance. Approximately 0.7 miles of new construction would be single-track trail. *See Trails Map Segments P53 through P61*

The **East Stacel Draw Trail** would have a combination of new construction (to replace an obliterated segment of Trail A), reconstruction and rerouting based on actual ground conditions. Approximately two miles of the new construction would be designated single-track trail; with about one mile of new construction designated for 50-inch or less motorized use. *See Trails Map Segments P68, P68A, and P69 through P71*

### Proposed Trail Changes Separated from the Honey Badger Project

There were some proposed changes to the trail system that cannot be carried forward as part of the Honey Badger project, but are feasible and will be pursued as separate proposals and analysis.

For example, as described under the Trails for Nonmotorized Uses discussion, there were recommendations to create and designate additional nonmotorized trail in the Canfield Mountain area through a combination of reconstructed user-created segments and new trail construction. This would provide access to Forest Service designated trails from private lands west of the project area. These trail segments would cross multiple private land ownerships, and would require legal easements to allow the public to cross those lands. We are seeking to obtain those easements, but the process can be lengthy; therefore, those proposals are not included in the Honey Badger project, but could be approved under separate analysis if/when the easements are obtained.

There was also a proposal to develop a trail with obstacles, for a more technically challenging experience for the over 50-inch motorized vehicles. While the proposal is potentially feasible, the decision to implement such a development would need to be made at the Forest Supervisor level, with the concurrence of the Regional Forester. Since the Honey Badger project decision will be made by the District Ranger, the obstacle trail is outside the scope of this project. Discussions between the district and the trails working group will continue, and the district will assist the group in presenting their proposal to the Forest Supervisor for consideration.

In addition, a proposal was made to create a nonmotorized winter/oversnow trail on an old road. This proposal needs to be addressed during the future oversnow planning process for the Coeur d'Alene River Ranger District, so it will not be addressed under the Honey Badger project analysis.

**Potential changes presented during scoping may not all be carried forward into the proposed action for analysis – there are trade-offs and choices to be made to ensure a sustainable trail system. The District Ranger is the responsible official for the project, and will work with the interdisciplinary team, Trails Working Group, and other members of the public to make those choices.**

